Insafe Helplines: Operations, Effectiveness and Emerging Issues For Internet Safety Helplines

# Details

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English

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## Type

Report and working paper

## Topics

## Sample

The report provides a brief profile of helplines in Belgium, Ireland, Malta
and Romania with a discussion of their organisational structure and the services and activities
provided. There are substantial differences across the Insafe network in the nature and size of
helplines. Most in fact are general service helplines with a smaller number of helplines of more
recent origin specialising in internet safety issues.

## Implications For Policy Makers About

## Implications For Stakeholders About

# Abstract

This report presents findings of research undertaken by EU Kids Online on behalf of European Schoolnet (EUN) on the operations, effectiveness and impact of Insafe helplines. Helplines form an integral part of the Safer Internet Centre (SIC) in each country within the Insafe network of 31 national awareness centres. Helplines provide a confidential counselling and support service and offer information, support, guidance and referral for young people as well as adults with responsibility for children.
The purpose of the study was to undertake research that would assist Insafe helplines to develop their effectiveness and demonstrate their impact. This study looked at both the wider context in which helplines operate, the new and emerging risks that internet use may pose for children and young people, the support required and the resources needed to respond effectively, as well as the implications for operational effectiveness. Respondents in the research, which included helpline professionals and volunteers, contributed to a discussion of successes as well as gaps in order to assist in the identification of strategies to support better awareness and monitoring of effectiveness.

# Outcome

. Evaluating success and effectiveness is recognised as an important yet challenging task for
helplines. Given the sensitive settings in which helplines operate, the development of indicators
must combine a range of quantitative and qualitative measures. Possible indicators considered
include capturing log data of calls to helplines, the number of calls to the service, the number of
successful or resolved calls, levels of public awareness of the helpline, and the quality of input
from other stakeholders. Using feedback from callers to gauge the effectiveness of the service
is presented as especially important. A third of the helplines who participated in the study do not
currently record such feedback and recommendations are made about how to take this forward. In
addition, the benefits of working within the Insafe network and the capacity to share best practice
on improving the evaluation process and enhancing the relationship between stakeholders and
helplines is noted.
5. Helplines are in an ideal position to identify new and emerging risks in relation to internet
safety. Through their close interactions with young people, they hear at first hand problems that
young people experience online. Collecting this information and using it to develop effective safety
responses is now a central part of what helplines do. The report summarises the most prominent
current and emerging risks reported by helplines. It also documents the challenges that staff
and volunteers encounter in implementing the helpline service. Recommendations for service
enhancements are made focussing on better data collection, knowledge exchange, publicity and
embedding of monitoring and evaluation activities.